



Canadian Teachers' Federation

Fédération canadienne des enseignantes et des enseignants

February 5, 2010

The Honourable James Moore
Minister of Canadian Heritage
and Official Languages
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Moore:

The Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) speaks for approximately 200,000 teachers in Canada as the national voice on education and related social issues. CTF membership includes teacher organizations across the country.

We heard from the media that the federal government was planning to permanently shut down the Learning Centre at Library and Archives Canada (LAC) on Wellington Street as of March 30th. This disappointing news came as an utter surprise for the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) and its Member organizations. Only recently, were we introduced to the LAC's wealth of educational resources and materials thanks to the Learning Centre which virtually unbolted the treasured vaults of Canadian documentary heritage and opened the doors to the vast array of educational resources, online programming and professional development.

Last November, the LAC hosted a CTF annual symposium attended by staff officers of teacher organizations across the country. The excellent presentations made by the Learning Centre acquainted staff officers with the websites, educational tools and digitized primary sources – including documents, diaries, maps, illustrations, paintings, manuscripts and music from the LAC collection.

The feedback and evaluations on the LAC were outstanding. Here are a few:

- *Fantastic! I had no idea what sort of a quality resource existed here. There are many great products for teachers and teacher organizations. (Manitoba)*
- *Excellent! Eye-opening. Resources that need to be shared with our respective audiences. (Nova Scotia)*
- *Excellent! Je retourne chez moi avec l'intention de partager ce petit bijou à mes collègues. Les possibilités sont illimitées!! (Nouveau-Brunswick)*

.../2

2490 Don Reid • Ottawa • ON • K1H 1E1 • Tel./Tél. 613-232-1505 • Fax 613-232-1886 • info@ctf-fce.ca • www.ctf-fce.ca

President/Présidente **Mary-Lou Donnelly** • Secretary General/Secrétaire général **Dr. Calvin Fraser**
Past President/Présidente sortante **Emily Noble**
Vice-Presidents/Vice-président(e)s **Frank Bruseker, Brent Shaw, Paul Taillefer, Dianne Woloschuk**

Honourable James Moore
February 5, 2010
Page two

- *Wow – passionate! Book more time for these folks! (Alberta)*
- *Outstanding! (Ontario)*
- *Most dynamic! Very relevant for teachers. Nice variety of resources. (Saskatchewan)*
- *This was spectacular – I wasn't sure what to expect but very worthwhile. Our job now is to get message (about the LAC) out to our members...(Alberta)*
- *Who knew? We will be able to share this resource with our members as well as use this information in our own work!(Newfoundland)*
- *Great programs being offered. "Lest we forget" is awesome! (Prince Edward Island).*

Not only do these resources stimulate students' imaginations and develop their critical thinking skills, but they also help teachers make Canadian history, literature and music come to life. The availability of these valued resources ignited an immediate commitment on the part of teacher organizations to share this information with their teacher members.

The educational expertise attached to it through the Learning Centre is a value added approach that makes the Library and Archives more meaningful, useful and accessible for schools.

Since the Symposium, CTF Member organizations have been actively promoting the LAC in their respective teacher publications. They have also featured the soon to be available educational resources such as *First Among Equals: The Prime Minister in Canadian Life and Politics*, a bilingual teachers' kit on all Canadian prime ministers; *Our Voices, Our Stories: First Nations, Métis and Inuit Stories* (Aboriginal storytelling) and *Canada: A Literary Tour* (creative writing activities related to Canadian literature), just to name a few.

What will come of these resources for teachers and students as well as all the others currently in the works?

We are also deeply concerned that the highly awarded educational program and most popular resource *Lest We Forget program*, will cease to provide Canadian students with a first-hand look into the lives of the Canadian soldiers who defended our country.

Honourable James Moore
February 5, 2010
Page three

As educators, we strive to connect and ignite within young citizens a sense of belonging to our country's rich history and archival treasures. We believe the move to close the LAC's Learning Centre will be a regressive step, and will lock away the resources and limit access to only a small segment of the population.

For these reasons and more, I urge your department to rescind its decision to dismantle the Learning Centre of Library and Archives.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "ML Donnelly". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mary-Lou Donnelly
President